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ABSTRACT

This explanation of the new course development process at the Community College of Philadelphia covers both the administrative procedures which should be followed and the components of the proposal for adding new courses. The paper first asks the instructor interested in proposing a new course to question its relationship to the goals of the school, program, and students; assess its feasibility; and determine whether it duplicates any other course. Next, an outline is presented of the 16 steps involved in effective educational planning at the course level. This outline leads the instructor from the prewriting steps of conceptualization of the course, confirmation of its consistency with institutional and program goals, and gaining of preliminary support from the department, division, and provost; through construction of the course to an appropriate level of development and the obtaining of approval; through the administrative steps (which are not explained) involved in budgeting, catalog inclusion, student recruitment, facilities planning, and faculty selection and orientation (these steps are not explained); to the final steps of course implementation, evaluation, and redesign. Next, the minimal, intermediate, and fully developed levels of course development mentioned in the outline are recognized and described. Finally, the procedures for developing and approving new career and general education courses and the slightly different procedures for developing support courses are described. (AYC)

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HANDBOOK FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AS IT RELATES TO NEW COURSE DEVELOPMENT AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA

Community College of Philadelphia

Office of the Provost and
Instructional Development Services

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to clarify and explain the academic planning process as it relates to new Course Development at the Community College of Philadelphia. These clarifications and explanations are brief, but greater clarification and explanation are available either from your department head or division director. This handbook will explain both the administrative procedures which should be followed and the proposal components which are necessary in making recommendations for adding courses. The use of this handbook should assist greatly in the development of new courses.

The underlying premise which supports this handbook is that all courses at the College are offered with a specified course design and objectives. Each course is expected to contribute in a substantial way to meeting the educational goals of the College, and of specific programs. Anyone who develops a course should be able to explain, in detail, the student outcomes which are expected from the course. The principles of course planning and development which are outlined in this handbook apply equally to all disciplines offered by the College.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AT COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA

Acknowledging that needs of students, society, and disciplines change, courses must be periodically reviewed, and sometimes dropped or revised, or new courses added, to meet the needs of the times. Most of the change is subtle from semester to semester and from instructor to instructor. From year to year, divisions have the responsibility to review all courses to assess the amount of change that has occurred and to decide whether or not the courses in each department are adequately meeting the needs of the students and whether any should be added or dropped.

Before the introduction of a new course takes place, several essential questions must be answered:

1. Does the proposed new course help improve the existing situation by realizing the educational goals of the College, of a specific program within the College, and/or of the students who attend the College?

2. Is the proposal feasible with regard to staffing, plant, and financial resources?

3. Is the proposal duplicating any other course offering?

As all colleges receive increasingly greater pressure both from financial supporters and consumer lobbyist to provide relevant and cost-effective education, the answers

to the above questions become critical. Educational planning will assure that answers are provided in a positive fashion before change in an academic program takes place at the College.

Effective educational planning involves many different persons. Persons are needed to conceptualize new courses, construct new courses, review new courses, budget for new courses, recruit students for new courses, hire faculty for new courses, and teach new courses. Rarely, if ever, does one person play all of the roles. The following Outline for New Course Planning has been developed as a guide to the sequence of steps for effective educational planning at course level:

OUTLINE FOR NEW COURSE PLANNING

1. Conceptualize the course.

In the beginning, someone conceives of a course and decides it should be written and entered into the College offerings.

2. Confirm consistency with institutional and program goals.

Before writing commences, the author should be certain that the goals and objectives conceived are consistent with the College goals and any relevant program goals. This can be done by checking with the appropriate department head(s) and division director(s) who will consult with the Provost. Unusual facilities, staffing or materials costs should also be identified at this time.

3. Gain preliminary support that such a course is likely to be supported for inclusion in the College catalogue.

Again, before the formal writing commences, the author should be certain that the appropriate department(s), division director(s) and Provost agree they will give support to the course concept. It is suggested that a document describing the course be prepared for the department head(s) to share at a department meeting to seek departmental consensus. This same document can then be forwarded by the department head(s) to the division director(s) who will seek preliminary support from the Provost. The purpose of this process is to save the intended author the effort of formally writing the course if there is insufficient support. It should be noted that verbal approval of the concept at this point does not imply automatic approval of the course after it is written.

4. Construct the course to an acceptable level of development.

The levels of development are described beginning on page 7. Assistance in this process is available from Instructional Development Services.

5. Obtain approval of the course.

Once the course has been written to an acceptable level of development, copies should be prepared for the department head(s) to share at a departmental meeting. Departmental consensus should be sought to demonstrate that the course will be supported by the department. The department head(s) should prepare a copy of the course (with departmental revisions, if any) for the division director with a full report of the departmental support. The division director(s) will prepare a full report for the Provost who will make the final decision concerning approval of the course.

The details of the next steps are beyond the scope of this handbook but are listed as they are necessary steps for effective educational planning:

6. Budget for the course
7. List the course in the catalog
8. Recruit students
9. Plan for plant and facilities
10. Hire or identify faculty to teach the course
11. Orient faculty to CCP, program and the course
12. Select and design instructional activities
13. Conduct the classroom instruction
14. Evaluate the course based on data from teaching the course.
15. Redesign the course based on evaluation data
16. Conduct the classroom instruction

It cannot be assumed that students are well enough informed to act in their own best interests in course selection nor is society likely in the future to condone a "let-the-buyer-beware" attitude toward higher education as they have in the past. Objectives, and not just goals, must be provided so that the educational intent can be understood and evaluated by all parties concerned.

In many cases, the course will be taught by faculty members other than those responsible for the initial development.

Therefore, courses should not be designed with particular faculty in mind. In order to assure that the original goals and objectives continue to be met as others become involved, course objectives and overall evaluation strategies must be defined so that any competent instructor could teach the course.

The new course proposal is required to facilitate budgeting after it has been completed and approved. When a course requires unusual staffing, plant facilities and/or materials development, and to allow for its inclusion in the College catalogue, the new course proposal must be written and approved well in advance of budgeting. Specific questions concerning timing should be discussed with the department head or division director.

The final step in the process, but also the beginning point in subsequent changes, is course evaluation. Evaluation is an ongoing process; it cannot be assumed that once a course has been proven effective and useful it will continue to be so indefinitely. The evaluation process will provide the information needed to make decisions on the necessary revisions, expansion or elimination of a course.

INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing that new course development is a long, arduous and dynamic process, several levels of completion are recognized.

Minimal Level

The lowest level of acceptable course development for the Course Proposal constitutes the course design and objectives. The course design includes: (1) a Statement of Purpose (or philosophy); (2) Goals; (3) a Course Outline; (4) a suggested bibliography; and (5) a completed Cover Form for the Course Proposal. The objectives will include both (1) Course Level Objectives and (2) Intermediate Performance Objectives. The Statement of Purpose should relate institutional and program goals with the course goals.

Intermediate Level

This level not only contains the minimal level course design and objectives, but also two forms of the final exam. Either form of the final exam should be acceptable for a pretest and both tests should be directly related to course level objectives.

Fully Developed Level

This level contains the elements of the intermediate level and has suggested activities for each intermediate performance objective. With full-time faculty constructing objectives and suggesting activities, part-time instructors will be gaining the experience of our faculty to provide better, more consistent instruction for our students.

Assistance for constructing courses is available from faculty, department heads, division directors, and instructional development specialists. Department heads will provide assistance in evaluating course content; department heads and division directors will provide assistance in evaluating courses with respect to programs; and instructional development specialists will provide assistance in the technical writing of objectives, tests and activities.

Copies of previously developed courses are available from Instructional Development Services.

PROCEDURES FOR COURSE DEVELOPMENT

After reviewing the institutional and program goals, it should be determined whether the course is: (1) to be taught within a department for a program in the same department (Career or General Education Courses); or (2) to be taught within a department for a program of another department (Support Courses). The process for developing and approving new Career or General Education Courses and new Support Courses is slightly different, as follows:

CAREER OR GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE

When developing a Career or General Education Course, follow this procedure:

1. When an individual wants to develop a course, one should seek verbal support from colleagues, the department head, the Division Director and the Provost before any written work commences. This will prevent unnecessary effort if there is a lack of support. "It should be noted that verbal approval of the concept at this point does not imply automatic approval of the course after it is written." Also at this time unusual costs for anticipated facilities, staffing or materials should be identified.

2. When support is gained, the course proposal writer should draft a preliminary proposal which includes the goals and course outline, and states the interrelationship of the course to institutional and program goals.

3. It is suggested that the writer then ask the department head to place the preliminary proposal on the agenda for a department meeting to gain departmental support.

4. The department head should then provide the division director with a copy of the preliminary proposal, recommendations from the department, a report of the discussion of the proposal at the departmental meeting, and a written personal recommendation.

5. The division director should then provide the Provost with a copy of the preliminary proposal, recommendations from the department, a report of the discussion of the proposal at the departmental meeting, a personal recommendation, and a report of any meeting(s) concerning the proposal conducted by the division director.

6. The division director should discuss the entire preliminary proposal with the Provost. The division director should then give feedback to the department head, who will forward it to the course proposal writer.

7. Once the course proposal writer has gained enough support for the preliminary proposal to construct the course proposal, the course should be written to an acceptable level of development.

8. After the course proposal has been written to an acceptable level of development, the course developer should attach the completed Course Proposal Cover Form to the front of the course proposal.

9. At this time, steps 3 through 6 of the above process are repeated with the appropriate signatures being obtained as indicated on the Course Proposal Cover Form. The Provost may also choose to place the course proposal on the agenda of a Division Director's Meeting for discussion.

10. If the Provost approves the course proposal, step 6 of the Outline for New Course Planning (page 5) will commence. The course will be budgeted and the remaining steps in the Outline will take place.

SUPPORT COURSE

Developing support courses is similar to developing Career and General Education courses except that two departments and possibly two divisions may be involved. It is recommended that there only be one writer of the course with an interdepartmental committee for coordination, constructive input, and editing. This committee should participate in each of the department's meetings pertaining to the proposal.

The department and division requesting the course should send a memorandum to the supporting department and division acknowledging approval of the course proposal at the time the Course Proposal Cover Form is being completed. The supporting department and division should submit the acknowledged approval with the completed course proposal.

For additional information, please contact your department office, division office or Instructional Development Services.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA

COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Please use this cover form when submitting the entire course for approval. Attach the course design, objectives, and any other elements to this form.

Name of Proposal Writer_____
Suggested Course Title_____
_____Number_____
Related Program(s)_____
Recommended Starting Date_____
Day_____Evenings_____Weekends_____
Is it offered every semester? Yes___ If no, state when_____
Does this course replace another course? No___ If yes, name the course.
_____

Department Name_____

Department Head Signature_____Date_____

Division Name_____

Division Director Signature_____Date_____

Provost Signature_____Date_____

Course Prerequisites_____
_____
Is course open to all students meeting requirements? Yes___ If no, please explain._____
_____
Limit on Class Size:
A. Contract _____
B. Laboratory Constraint _____
C. Clinical Constraint _____
Expected Enrollment: _____
Special Costs involved in offering course (itemize)_____
_____
_____
Credit Hours_____Lecture Hours_____
Laboratory Hours_____Clinical Hours_____
Career_____General Education_____Support_____

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